

Letter to US Biathlon Board & Community Members

Dear US Biathlon Board & Community Members,

After weighing the survey results, the additional information provided by USBA leadership, and significant recent developments, we believe the best course for US Biathlon is for the Board to Vote No on the proposed USBA–USSS alliance and begin a transparent process to develop a stronger alternative.

When we distributed The People on the Snow survey, we committed to sharing the results with respondents who provided contact information and we are following up with additional thoughts on the proposed relationship between US Biathlon and U.S. Ski & Snowboard developed.

After sharing the survey results we had an opportunity to meet with USBA Board members, including executive leadership and an Athlete Representative, to discuss the survey and learn more about the proposed alliance. We subsequently submitted written follow-up questions and received additional responses from USBA CEO Jack Gierhart, along with organizational and committee charts.

We appreciate the time and candor extended to us. The conversations clarified several meaningful protections reportedly included in the agreement:

- USBA would remain a separate national governing body with its own Board.
- Funds designated for biathlon would be maintained in separate USBA accounts and used only for biathlon.
- The USBA Board would continue approving the biathlon operating plan and budget.
- Biathlon staff would remain responsible for coaches, officials, clubs, domestic events, and athlete development.
- USBA's intellectual property, records, and employees would be protected through an exit transition.

These answers improved our understanding of the proposal. They also demonstrated that the Board, staff, and Athlete Representatives have invested considerable effort in strengthening an agreement that was initially drafted by USSS and has evolved significantly during negotiations.

We understand that our appreciation for that engagement may have been interpreted as support for the alliance. We want to respectfully correct any such impression: the meeting left us better informed, but it did not leave us persuaded that the agreement should be approved.

Several consequential elements remain incomplete or insufficiently clear.

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- Alliance-specific KPIs would not be developed until as many as 90 days after execution. The USBA Board apparently would not have unilateral authority to reject those KPIs, even though failure to meet them would become a principal basis for evaluating—and potentially terminating—the alliance.
- The precise financial terms also remain unclear. We now understand that USBA would pay an annual administrative charge and that sponsorship contributions would be credited “net,” but we do not know the amount or formula for those charges, the distinction between guaranteed revenue and financial targets, or how biathlon's share of multisport commercial agreements would be calculated.
- The organizational chart provides useful information but does not fully resolve the Biathlon Executive Director's accountability to the USBA Board versus USSS leadership. Nor have the final composition, authority, and guaranteed community representation of the Biathlon Sport Committee and its subcommittees

been established.

- Finally, the exit provision appears to permit termination at any point only for sufficient cause—such as persistent KPI failures or irreconcilable dysfunction. It does not appear to give USBA an unrestricted right to leave simply because its Board concludes that the alliance is no longer in the organization's best interests. Questions also remain about whether biathlon's commercial assets could be committed to longer-term sponsorship, licensing, or investment arrangements that would continue after USBA exited.

These are not peripheral implementation details. They determine who holds authority, what USBA receives, how performance is enforced, and whether the organization could emerge from an unsuccessful alliance financially and operationally whole.

Fundamental Concerns

Since receiving Jack's answers, we have reviewed a separate September 8 letter submitted to the USBA Board by another group of biathlon supporters. That letter reports troubling interactions involving athlete representatives and attributes several troubling statements to USSS executive leadership during an internal meeting.

Among the comments attributed to USSS leadership are statements that:

- cross-country and USSS's existing core sports would remain their priority;
- biathlon's funding could help support the cross-country program;
- commercializing biathlon could create a financial "halo effect" for the broader USSS organization; and
- members of the biathlon community may not know everything occurring behind the scenes because matters sometimes need to be "positioned" in a particular way.

The letter also reports that athlete representatives experienced inappropriate pressure while advocating for stronger protections in the agreement.

We were not participants in the reported conversations and are not presenting every allegation as an independently established fact. Context and authentication matter, and the individuals involved deserve a fair opportunity to respond. Nevertheless, reports of this seriousness—based at least partly on recorded statements—cannot responsibly be disregarded or treated as ordinary disagreement surrounding a difficult negotiation. They warrant prompt and independent review by the USBA Board before any agreement is approved.

If accurately reported, the statements reveal a potential misalignment more fundamental than any individual contract provision. USBA has been publicly assured that the alliance would elevate biathlon, protect its resources, and create mutually beneficial opportunities. Internal statements suggesting that existing USSS sports would remain the priority and that biathlon resources could benefit cross-country present a materially different picture.

A contract can allocate authority, establish financial protections, and create exit procedures. It cannot, by itself, manufacture aligned priorities, mutual trust, or a healthy working culture. Those qualities are particularly important when many operational details will be developed after the agreement is signed and will depend heavily on collaboration between the same executive leaders.

Our Conclusion

Based on the information presently available, we cannot recommend approval of the proposed alliance at this time.

This conclusion is neither a rejection of collaboration with USSS in every form nor is it an indictment of the intentions or commitment of USBA's Board. We continue to believe there may be substantial value in carefully structured cooperation involving commercialization, shared services, technology, events, or other defined areas.

Our conclusion reflects the combination of:

1. material financial, governance, performance, and exit terms that remain unresolved or unavailable for review; and
2. new reports that raise serious questions about the priorities, conduct, and suitability of the prospective partner's executive leadership.

We believe two responsible paths remain available to the Board.

- The first is to pause approval of the current agreement, independently investigate the recorded statements and reported treatment of Athlete Representatives, complete the material financial, governance, performance, and exit provisions, obtain independent legal and commercial review, and, most critically, engage in a direct, meaningful conversation with the community in order to provide sufficient information and time to evaluate the resulting proposal. We believe this is the only way to ensure community understanding and buy-in that is critical to our success as an organization.
- The second is to vote against the current proposal and initiate a transparent, time-bound process for developing a stronger alternative. That process should begin by clearly identifying USBA's actual near- and long-term budget shortfalls and obtaining an independent inventory and valuation of its commercial portfolio. From there, the Board could meaningfully engage athletes, clubs, coaches, officials, volunteers, donors, event organizers, and commercial experts in developing solutions around:
 - expanding major-donor and foundation support;
 - increasing the value of sponsorship, media, licensing, and event assets;
 - strengthening clubs, membership, domestic events, and grassroots development as engines of both participation and revenue;
 - identifying administrative or commercial functions that could be selectively outsourced or shared without surrendering broader control; and
 - establishing clear investment priorities for athlete support, coaching, technology, and long-term development.

Neither course would represent a failure of leadership or a rejection of the work already completed. Both recognize that the organization has learned important new information and that a decision of this consequence should be made only when the Board is confident in both the agreement AND the partner. Either path would also give the Board an opportunity to lead the community toward a more durable and broadly supported solution.

We also want to express our continued appreciation for Board Chair Bob Hall and the other Board members who met with us. Bob's fundraising leadership, relationships, and commitment have contributed substantially to US Biathlon's progress. Reconsidering or pausing a transaction in response to important new information would not diminish that work or represent a failure of leadership. It would demonstrate that the organization's governance process is working as it should. We sincerely hope Bob and the full Board will continue providing their leadership as USBA determines its best path forward.

Our purpose throughout this process has been to help US Biathlon reach a durable solution worthy of its athletes, members, clubs, coaches, officials, volunteers, donors, and decades of accumulated expertise. We remain committed to that objective and will continue approaching the evidence with care, fairness, and an open mind.

Thank you again for your participation, patience, and commitment to the future of US Biathlon.

Sincerely,

Zach Hall, Matt Sabasteanski, Shawn Robison, & Tracy Lamb